FREEDOM.

BY SUSAN COOLIDGE.

I would be free! For Freedom is all fair,
And her strong smile is like the smile of God.
Her voice rings out like trumpet on the air,
And men rise up and follow; though the road
Be all unknown and hard to understand,
They tread it gladly, holding Freedom's hand.

I would be free! The little spark of Heaven
Let in my soul when life was breathed in me
Is like a flame, this way and that way driven
By ever wavering winds, which ceaselessly
Kindle and blow till all my soul is hot,
And would consume if liberty were not.

I would be free! But what is freedom, then!
For widely various are the shapes she wears
In different ages and to different men;
And many titles, many forms she bears—
Riot and revolution, sword and flame—
All called in turn by Freedom's honored name.

I would be free. Not free to burn and spoil,
To trample down the weak and smite the strong,
To seize the larger share of wine and oil,
And rob the sun my daylight to prolong,
And rob the night of sleep while others wake—
Feast on their famine, basely free to take.

I would be free! Free in a dearer way—
Free to become all that I may or can;
To be my best and utmost self each day,
Not held or bound by any chain of man,
By dull convention, or by foolish sneer,
Or love's mistaken grasp of feeble fear.

Free to be kind, and true and faithful; free
To do the happy thing that makes life good,
To grow as grows the goodly forest-tree.
By none gainsaid, by none misunderstood,
To taste life's freshness with a child's delight,
And find new joy in every day and night.

I would be free! Ah! so may all be free.
Then shall the world grow sweet at core and sound,
And, moved in blest and ordered circuit, see
The bright millennial sun rise fair and round,
Heaven's day begin, and Christ, whose service is
Freedom all perfect, rule the world as His.

ORDINARY PEOPLE.

SERMON BY REV. T. DE WITT TALMAGH, D. D.

TEXT.—"Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, Philologus and Julia."—Rom. 16 : 14, 15.

The great commentators, Matthew Henry, Thomas Scott, Adam Clarke and Albert Barnes, pass over these verses without especial comment. The other twenty people mentioned in this chapter of Paul were distinguished for something, and were discussed by the eminent expositors. But nobody says anything about Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, Philologus and Julia. Where were they born? No one knows. Where did they die? Their demise is not recorded. What sort of people were they? Not distinguished for anything, or their characteristics would have been depicted. Had they been very opulent, or intrepid, or musical of cadence, or cross of style, these features would have been photographed by the apostolic camera. But that they were good people is certain, because Paul sends them his high Christian regards. They were ordinary people in ordinary spheres, doing ordinary work and meeting ordinary responsibilities, and so I am especially interested in them. Let Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes. Philologus, and Julia, so long neglected by the world's biographical gallery, stand up to-day for sermonic admiration and improvement.

What the world most needs is religion for ordinary people. We spend much of our time in rhapsody of the remarkables, twisting garlands for conquerors, building thrones for magnates, sculpturing warriors and apotheosizing orators. What is most needed is appreciation of the rank and file of the Lord's soldiery, and so, turning aside to-day from the hundreds of Bible extraordinaries we give special attention in the text to these seven ordinaries. The vast majority of you to whom this sermon comes, by voice or type, will never lead an army, will never frame a State constitution, will never make a valuable invention, will never endow an observatory, will never electrify an assembly, will never propound a new philosophy, will never decide a nation's destiny. You don't expect to. You don't want to. You will not be a Moses to lead a race out of bondage, or a Joshua to prolong the daylight until you can put five kings into a cavern, or a Paul to preside over the Apostolic College, or a St. John to describe an apocalypse, or a Mary to mother a Christ. You will more probably be an Asyncritus, or a Plegon or Hermas or Patrobas or Hermes or Philologus or Julia.

Vast numbers of you are women at the head of households. You had to launch the family this morning for Sabbath observance. Your brain planned the style of apparel of the whole group, and your law is final in all matters of personal attire. Every morning you plan for the day. The culinary department is under your dominion. You decide the diet of the household. The sanitary regulations of your home are under your direction. To regulate the food and the apparel and the habits and to settle a thousand questions of home-life is a tax on nerve and brain, and general health appalling if there be no divine alleviation. It does not help you much to be told of Elizabeth Fry's notable behavior among the criminals of Newgate, or Mrs. Judson's bravery among Bornesian cannibals, or Florence Nightingale's kindness toward the wounded of the Crimea. It is better that I tell you that the Divine Friend of Mary and Martha is your friend and knows of the worriments, of the fatigues and exasperations to which the ordinary housekeeper is put from morning to night and from the first day of the year to the last, and that you may have His sympathy and reinforcement, the housekeepers of the world decide the health of the world. Napoleon lost a great battle through a fit of indigestion that morning. If one on a business errand travel around amid country and village hotels of England and America, he appreciates how large a portion of the human race is slaughtered by inefficient cookery. Though a woman may have taken lessons in music and lessons in painting and lessons in astronomy, she is not well educated until she has taken lessons in dough. They who educate and clothe the race decide its capacity for endurance.

To unthinking men the management of domestic economies may seem insignificant, but the earth is strewn with the martyrs of kitchen and nursery. The health-shattered woman of America cries out for a God who can help in the ordinary cares of home life. In silence the wearing, grinding, exhausting, unappreciated work of woman goes on. Yet the Christ who at early dawn on the bank of Galilee had the fire already built and the fish cleaned and broiling for the sportsmen as they stepped ashore, hungry and chill, will, if asked, help every woman get breakfast, whether with her own hands or through hired help she provides the morning repast. The Christ who rubbed the grain in his hand on Sunday morning while crossing the corn-field, will, if asked, help in all bread-making. The God who honored Hannah with indestructible eulogy because she made a coat and took it to the temple for her son Samuel, sympathizes in your making up the family apparel. The God who opens the Bible with the story of Abraham's entertainment of three angels on the plains of Mamre, will assist all women in providing hospitalities, though for rarest and most embarrassing occasions. You have heard the pulpit for so many years give emphatic encomium or excoriation of the conspicuous women of the Bible, Deborah and Jezebel, and Esther and Athaliah, and Herodias and Dorcas, and the Marys, whether excellent or abandoned, that it is high time you noticed in the text, Julia.

Then there are the ordinary business men. How little help they get for their duties. But the ordinary business men want encouragement and want help. Don't you see how rapidly the wrinkles print the countenance with story of fatigue and worriment? You can't tell how old business men are by their looks. Some of them go around at thirty years of age with gray hairs. Many of them at forty have on their shoulders the stoop of the nonagenarian. No time to attend to important dentistry, their grinders cease because they are few. Old and worn-out at fifty years of age, when they ought to be at their meridian. Greenwood has thousands and tens of thousands of New York and Brooklyn business men who died of old age at thirty and forty and forty-five.

More grace for ordinary business men who are harnessed all the day and all the year and all through life! Grace not to stand the loss of a hundred thousand dollars, but the loss of ten dollars. Grace for damage that comes not by the late passage of a law by Congress, but from the tardiness of an errand boy in stopping to play marbles when he ought to have been delivering the goods, that grace which kept thousands of men in ordinary business places calm and happy whether goods sell or don't sell, whether customers pay or don't pay, whether high tariff or free trade succeed in coming to ascendency, whether the crops fail or are luxuriant in all four seasons and amid all vicissitudes. Some hero or heroine comes to town and people stand on tip-toe on their stone steps to catch a glimpse of some one who in Arctic clime, or in day of battle, or amid ocean storm, or in mitigating hospital agencies did the brave thing, not knowing that they, the enthusiastic spectators who never thought themselves anything remarkable, have in ordinary life gone through exhaustions of business trial and trouble which before God are just as great. Many a man has gone through freezing Arctics and burning Torrids and awful Marengos of experience without having moved five miles from his own doorstep. What these ordinary business men need to know is that the Christ who looked after the religious interests of Matthew the custom-house clerk, and helped Lydia, of Thyatira, to sell purple cloths, and opened a bakery and fish market in the wilderness of Asia Minor, to feed the 7,000 who had come out on a religious picnic, and who counts the hairs of your head with as much particularity as though they were the plumes of a coronation, and who wrote with his finger on the ground, though the first shuffle of feet obliterated the divine chirography, and who knew just how many locusts were in the plague of Egypt, whether an odd number or an even number, and how many ravens were necessary to supply Elijah's pantry by the brook Cherith, and who leads forth as floral commander all the hosts of primroses, hollyhocks, foxgloves and daffodils that pitch their tents of beauty and kindle their campfires of color around the hemisphere, that this God looks after all business affairs, however minute and seemingly inconsiderable.

Then there are the ordinary farmers. If we speak of agriculturists we begin to distinguish their work by reference Cincinnatus, the patrician senator, who was at the plow when called to great position, and who, twenty-one days after he got through his great dictatorship, went back to the plow. But the vast majority of farmers never were senators and never will be dictators except with the forty or fifty or hundred acres of the old homestead. What they want is grace to drive off the oxen and to endure the drouth that uses up the corn crop, and to restore the garden the night after the neighbor's cattle have trampled the strawberry beds, and gone through the lima bean patch and eaten up the sweet corn in such quantities that they have to be kept away from the water lest they swell up and die, and in "catching" weather to spread out the hay again without imprecation after it has been three times almost ready for the mow, and to doctor the cow with the hollow horn, and the sheep with the foot-rot, and the horse with the distemper, and with very unwilling acres to compel a livelihood for the family, and schooling for the children, and a little sum to start the older boy in business, or provide for the daughter a wedding outfit, and a little surplus for the years when the ankles may become stiff, and the breath short, and the swing of the cradle across the harvest field bring the old man vertigo. Better close up about Cincinnatus the patrician. I know five hundred farmers just as noble as he, and they want the cross of that Christ who was in such sympathy with the farmer's life that he frequently drew his illustrations from it, as when he said: "The sower went forth to sow," and who built his best parable out of the scene of a farmer's boy coming back from his wanderings to the old farm house, which shook with rural jubilee, and compared himself to a lamb of the pasture field and said that the eternal God himself is a farmer, declaring, "My Father is the husbandman."

The stonemasons do not want to know so much about the fact that Christopher Wren, the architect, built St. Paul's cathedral, as how to carry a hod up the wall without slipping, and smooth off the mortar with a trowel on a cold morning without complaint, and to be thankful for the food taken from the pail at the roadside. The carpenter, standing beside adze and plane and bit and auger and broadaxe, needs to realize that Christ was a carpenter once, and with his own right hand wielded hammer and saw. It is a very tired world, and there are millions of people overworked and underfed and wrung out, and they want the rest and recuperation only to be found in God and his religion, which was meant not so much for extraordinary folks as for the ordinary, because there are more of them. The cataplasm must be cut the shape of the wound. The healing profession has had its Abercrombies, and Valentine Motts, and Williard Parkers, but the ordinary doctors do the most of the world's medicining, and they need to know that they may have in the taking of every diagnosis and prognosis, and in the writing of every prescription, and in the compounding of medicaments, and in feeling of every babe's pulse the presence and dictation of the Omnipotent Doctor who took the case of the madman of Gadara, when he had torn his clothes into tatters in foaming dementia, and clothed him body and mind, and lifted the woman bent almost double for eighteen years with rheumatism, into graceful stature, and turned the scabs of leprosy into roseate complexions, and rubbed the numbness out of paralysis, and swung open the closed windows of hereditary or accidental blindness until the morning light came streaming through the palatial casements; and who knows all the ailments and all the remedies, all the herbs and all the catholicons, the Monarch of all pharmacy and therapeutics and who has sent forth to stand in this land tens of thousands of physicians of whom no record on earth will ever be made to prove that they are angels of mercy, I call upon the men whose sufferings they have assuaged and the women in whose cries of pain they have stood next to God in benevolence. Come! Let us have a Gospel for the ordinary men and women in the professions, in merchandise, in mechanics, in housekeeping, in literature, in agriculture. Take this salutation across the ages. Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, Philologus and Julia.

First of all, let all who consider themselves ordinary thank God that you are not extraordinary. I am tired and sick and bored almost to death with extraordinary people. They take most of their time in telling you how extraordinary they really are. The most useful work of the world is done by people who unpretentiously work right on. Phenomena are of but little use. Things exceptional cannot be depended on. More to be trusted is the smallest planet that turns regularly in its orb than ten comets, darting this way and that, endangering the longevity of worlds attending to their own business. Better for steady illumination a lamp than a rocket. Moreover ordinary life invites less attack. Conspicuous people, how they have to take it! How they are misrepresented and abused and shot at! The higher the horns of a roebuck, the easier to track him down. Nearly all the men and women who in history have a halo about their names once wore a crown of thorns. Take the few men who are counted extraordinary railroad men in our time. The abuse of the world gathers upon them while the ordinary men in their companies escape. The weather of life is not so severe on the plains as on the high rocks. The world never forgives a man for knowing more, or gaining more, or doing more than it can know or gain or do. As parents sometimes give confectionary to a child to take before medicine, so the world's sugar plum precedes the world's aqua fortis. The mob who cried after Christ, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" were so hoarse that they had to say it twice so as to be understood, and they had got their hoarseness by crying at the top of their voice, "Hosanna!" The river Rhone waters Lake Leman foul, and comes out crystalline, but many a man has entered the bright lake of worldly success crystalline and come out fearfully riley. Thank God day by day if you are only ordinary because of the placidity and defences of your position.

Remember also that from your style of home the mightiest of the world's deliverers have come and that reading by your evening stand there may be a child potent amid the ages. Call the long roll of the Church's great, and the world's great, and you will find that they come from log cabins and unpretentious homes. Really extraordinary people never have extraordinary parentage. By the second or third generation the genius is sure to run out. It is the ordinary that gives birth to the extraordinary. There never has been a case where the third generation of extraordinary people amounted to anything. In our land we had two great men, father and son, Presidents of the United States, but judging from present appearances that genealogical line will not provide another President for the next thousand years. Columbus from a weaver's hut, Demosthenes from the cutler's home, Bloomfield from a shoemaker's bench, Arkwright from a barber's shop, and He whose name is over all on earth and air and sky, from a Bethlehem manger.

Last of all, remember to be contented with your lot. We owe as much to God for what he has kept from us as for what he has given us. Even a knot may be useful, if it is at the end of a thread. The blackboard at the anniversary of a deaf and dumb asylum had on it something as sublime as the Illiad and Odyssey and Divina Comedia compressed in one. "Who made the world?" the examiner asked in the signs of the mute language. The deaf and dumb girl wrote upon the blackboard: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." The examiner asked: "Why did Jesus Christ come into the world?" the deaf and dumb girl wrote: "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." The examiner asked: "Why were you born deaf and dumb while I hear and speak?" The student wrote this answer: "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in Thy sight." So may we be in accord with our circumstances. A spider will draw poison out of a flower but a bee will get honey out of a thistle, and happiness is a heavenly cheer, and a contented spirit extracts it not from the rhododendron of the mountain, but from the lily of the valley.

He that judges without informing himself to the utmost that he is capable, can not acquit himself of judging amiss.

Many men have just enough faith to make them miserable, but not enough to make them hopeful.

Though the mills of the gods grind slowly they grind exceedingly small.